

Semi-Weekly South Kentuckian.

VOLUME IX.

HOPKINSVILLE, CHRISTIAN COUNTY, KY., MARCH 25, 1887.

NUMBER 24

CHAS. M. MEACHAM. W. A. WILGUS.
ISSUED EVERY TUESDAY AND FRIDAY
MORNING BY
MEACHAM & WILGUS,
PUBLISHERS AND PROPRIETORS.

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One copy, one year, strictly cash in ad-
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Adventures of Tad;

— OR THE —
HAPS AND MISHAPS OF A LOST SACHEL.

A Story for Young and Old.

BY FRANK H. CONVERSE,
AUTHOR OF "PEPPER ADAMS," "BLOWN OUT
TO SEA," "PAUL GRAYTON," ETC.

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CHAPTER VII.—CONTINUED.
"I guess you'll do," she finally said,
"at least I'm minded to try you, so you
can come over and begin work early
Monday morning."

"Thank you, marm," replied Tad,
with a beaming face. "I'll be here early,
and though I'm kind of green, Miss
Smith," he added, earnestly, "I'll learn
just as fast as ever I can, and work all
the harder to make up."

"Well, we'll see," was the only re-
ply. Miss Smith's faith in juvenile
promises had been rudely shattered by
the frequent breakages that she had
known in her experience. At the same
time she felt rather drawn toward this
pale-faced orphaned boy—though she
would not have owned it, even to her
own self.

"Don't you let that Joe Whitney lead
you into any mischief before you get
back to Cap'n Plagg's," said Miss
Smith, earnestly, raising her voice for
Joe's edification, as Tad joined him
outside the gate.

"Now, Miss Smith," expostulated the
injured youth, "that isn't fair!" The
maiden lady smiled significantly, and
muttering something about "innocent
Abigail," resumed raking, while Tad,
exultant over his future prospects, fore-
bore to repeat his mischievous com-
panion for the little episode I have nar-
rated, and the two walked away to-
gether in the most amicable manner.

CHAPTER VIII.
Who that was ever a boy has forgot-
ten, or will forget, his first fishing ex-
perience? No matter whether it was
angling for minnows from the wharf,
with a pin-hook, catching "pumpkin
seeds" from the mill-pond logs or fol-
lowing up an alder-fringed brook in
pursuit of trout—he will be sure to re-



member it a great deal longer than he
will the more important episodes of his
later life. And I know one in particular
who will always remember his boyish
debuts in the fishing line—I mean Tad
Thorne.

It was the Saturday morning follow-
ing Tad's peculiar introduction to Miss
Smith, and an unusually mild day for a
New England April, which uncertain
month is very apt to seem so much like
March, to resemble a younger brother.

Joe and Tad were digging bait in
Deacon Whitney's barn-yard; that is,
Joe did the digging while Tad placed the
angle-worms in a round tin must-
ard-box, with a ventilating cover.

"There!" said Joe, straightening up,
"and now, Tad—you playguy old fat-
tle-tale!"

Tad looked up in the astonish-
ment; but the mischief of Joe's non-
tenance was evidently not addressed to
himself.

It was churning-day at Deacon Whit-
ney's, and Joe's eyes were fixed on the
retreating form of Miss Smith's hired
help who had come over to bespeak
some butter-milk for Miss Smith's pig.
Samantha Nason was given to gossip,
and Joe's guilty conscience at once
assured him that she had lost no time
in telling the story of his late humorous
performance to the deacon, Mrs. Whit-
ney and his sister Nell.

"I guess we'd better be off," re-
marked Joe, rather hastily; "and, in-
stead of going out the front way, we'll
take a short cut down through the
fields. You've got your lines all
right?"

Tad tapped his pocket significantly,
and adjusted the tin-box cover while
Joe was putting the shovel back in the
barn.

"Come on, then, Tad," said his com-
panion, with an uneasy glance at the
back kitchen, which Tad did not quite
understand, and with his words Joe
dodged hastily behind the barn, fol-
lowed by Tad; but, alas! he was too
late!

From the open kitchen-window came
the cry, in his sister Nell's voice:
"Joe—come right into the house—
father wants you!"

"Hush! it all!" muttered Joe, with a
vindictive kick at the fence-rail; now
I've got to catch it!"

"Catch what?" wonderingly asked
Tad, though with an intuitive suspicion
that Joe was not referring to the pros-
pective catch of trout.

Joe did not reply, but with a gloomy
and vengeful expression, slunk into the
barn by the small rear door, followed
by his wondering companion. From
behind the corn-crisp Joe hastily pulled
the bottom of an old pasteboard band-
box.

"Shove it up under my coat, behind
—quick, Tad!" he exclaimed, in an agi-
tated whisper, "and then you go along
to the brook—may be I can get off
time-by. It don't hurt much of any,
with this," added Joe, with a rather
sneaky smile, as he touched the small of
his back significantly, "only I've got

to get a new piece of pasteboard—this
is pretty high worn out."

"Are you coming, Joseph?"

The voice was Deacon Whitney's,
and sounded from the wood-shed close
by. Tad fled ignominiously through
the rear barn door, while Joe reluc-
tantly obeyed the direct summons. Not
that Deacon Whitney was unreason-
ably harsh or stern. Indeed, his wife
said: "Joe's thrashin' hurt the deacon
a dreadful sight more'n they did Joe,"—
which was doubtless true. The boy
knew that his father loved him sin-
cerely, and that the whippings were
not given in anger, but from a sense of
duty, and though he would willingly
have dispensed with them, Joe never
cherished the slightest feelings of anger
or resentment, after the first smart had
passed away.

Leaving Joe to his impending fate,
Tad climbed the barn-yard fence, and
with a jubilant feeling of gladness,
which was only shadowed by the oc-
casional thought of his new friend's
disappointment, made his way down
across the deacon's meadows, to the
brook.

Tad knew nothing whatever about
trout-fishing, as a matter of course.
He had taught himself to swim, and
from the pier, like most city boys—
but only those. However, he had a
general idea of some of the require-
ments for the piscatorial art. So, with
a very light heart, he followed the
"mill brook," as it was called, through
a field and an adjoining pasture, till he
came to an alder swamp, where, hav-
ing cut a pole, Tad sat himself down to
shape and trim it.

Well, it was indeed a lovely morn-
ing. The sky above him, flecked with
drifting white clouds, was of the deep-
est blue, the air soft and spring-like,
and the peaceful stillness unbroken
only by the occasional cawing of crows
or scream of a bluejay.

Tad sat drinking in the beauty of the
time and place, softly whistling to him-
self as he worked, and thought over the
many strange things that had come in-
to his life in one short week, and all
because an absent-minded man had left
his traveling-satchel on the seat in a
railroad station.

"Why, it just seems as though I'd
been swooped off for somebody else,"
he said, with a great sigh of thank-
fulness. And though, as might be ex-
pected, Tad Thorne's religious knowl-
edge was of the vaguest possible order,
he somehow felt his heart going out,
thankfully, to the Maker of such a
beautiful world.

"There," said Tad, as, finishing trim-
ing the pole, he rose to his feet and
brushed off the twigs, "now for the
trout."

The brook went dancing and laugh-
ing along at his side, with here and
there a minnow water-far at its feet,
which the foam and bubbles drifted
about in frothy masses.

With fingers trembling a little with
excitement, Tad fastened his line, with
its heavy sinker and hook large enough
for black bass, to the end of the pole.
Adjusting the bait, he threw his line
into the deep pool at the foot of the
pool.

"I guess it isn't a very good day for
trout, any way," he murmured, after
about five minutes of letting his line
drift along in the current, and pulling
it up again. But stop! a little tug at
the hook sent a thrill from his finger-
tips to his head. With a jerk that
would have landed a three-pound trout,
Tad pulled out a chubby about four inches
long, which, with hook, line and sink-
er, was immediately entangled in the
alder branches over his head, requiring
some ten minutes of perspiring effort to
clear it.

"Trout ain't as big as I thought for,"
he said, half aloud, as he surveyed the
specimen. "It must take an awful lot of
um to make a mess." Tad added,
gravely, as he strung the small fish on
a twig, and made his way a little fur-
ther up-stream, in his ignorance pass-
ing over the deep pools and swelling
eddies, which are generally the luck-
y-places of the spotted beauties.

By eleven o'clock, Tad, who had
caught seven chubs, each about a finger
in length, began to think that the
charm of trouting had been consider-
ably overrated. It was rather early
in the season for mosquitoes, yet there
were quite enough of them about to
make it quite irksome for a fisherman.
He had ascended the brook about two
miles, and was tired and decidedly
hungry; and, moreover, he found him-
self right in the heart of what seemed
to Tad's unaccustomed eyes a bound-
less forest.

Sitting down on a stump, Tad gazed
about him, wondering at the solemn
silence. Overhead, the "high" birds
scattered the tops of the great
pines. Red squirrels chattered in the
spruce and hemlock trees, and a particu-
larly venturesome one dropped a
cone from an overhanging bough at his
very feet, vanishing among the branches
with wonderful swiftness, as Tad
looked suddenly up. A partridge
drummed in the distance, and a wood-
chuck scampered rapidly through the
underbrush at a little way off.

"Come on, then, Tad," said his com-
panion, with an uneasy glance at the
back kitchen, which Tad did not quite
understand, and with his words Joe
dodged hastily behind the barn, fol-
lowed by Tad; but, alas! he was too
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or scream of a bluejay.

his hand, and awaited the overcoming
monster!

CHAPTER IX.

The spruce-bushes parted suddenly;
but, instead of disclosing the form of a
ferocious bear, nothing more formida-
ble than the good-humored features of
Joe Whitney, adorned with an ex-
pressive grin, was revealed. There
were traces of recent tears on his
freckled face, yet mirth beamed from
his eyes, and it was evident that the re-
cent punishment had not had a very
depressing effect on his animal spirits.

"Thought I was a bear, didn't you,
Tad?" he remarked, laughing. And
Tad, too much relieved at the prospect
of companionship to feel very angry,
answered, with a feeble smile, that he
was kind of startled, and made haste
to change the subject.

"I've got seven trout, but they're aw-
ful small," said Tad, producing his
catch, with a rather disconsolate air.
Joe started, whistled and then
roared.

"Why, you goose!" he shouted, but
so good-naturedly that it was impos-
sible to be angry with him, "those
ain't trout—they're chubs!"

Poor Tad felt tremendously mortif-
ied, but speedily forgot his mortifica-
tion in real honest admiration of a
string of trout—the largest of which
would weigh quite a quarter of a
pound—that Joe brought out, together
with an alder pole, from the thicket
where he had enacted the bear.

"I dug some bait on the way, and
caught these little fellows coming
along," explained Joe, as he held them
up before his companion's admiring
gaze.

"Oh, wouldn't I like to catch just
one trout!" sighed Tad, and Joe
stoutly assured him not to worry—he'd
put him up to catching more than one
—perhaps half a dozen—before they
returned.

"Did it hurt you very much?" in-
quired Tad, presently, with delicate
reference to the cause of his com-
panion's detention.

"The pasteboard wasn't quite low
down enough," said Joe, mournfully,
and Tad asked no further questions.
"Father didn't flog me for just hav-
ing a little fun with you and Miss
Smith," Joe went on after a short
pause, "but because he said I was good
as dead when I made her think that
you was dead, and you think that she
was."

"Well," returned Tad, hesitatingly,
"I don't know—you didn't mean to say
what wasn't true, any way."

"No," said Joe, frankly; "I didn't! I
knew a square up and down. But he
said the next one; but, come to study on
it over, I guess we fellows don't stop to
think long enough, sometimes, and lie
when we don't mean to; anyhow, I do,
and I'm going to try and stop it."

his was quite an admission for Joe,
who was generally very chary of ac-
knowledging a fault. But he had
begun to feel a strong boyish affection
for his companion, and spoke more
openly to him than he was in the habit
of doing.

"But what made you so long getting
here?" asked Tad, breaking the little
silence that followed.

"Why, after father—got through
with me," returned Joe, while a hu-
morous smile began to hover about his
mouth, "he set me churning, and went
off down town on an errand. Mother,
she was sent for to go over to Miss
Emory's, all of a sudden, and, by gra-
tious!" said Joe, rubbing his shoul-
ders, "I thought my arms would just
unhinge out of the sockets before the
butter came. Well, Nell, she took the
butter down into the cellar kitchen to
work it, and forgot to empty the churn
(as mother always does), and whilst
she was down there," continued Joe,
whose smile had begun to broaden, "I
saw father coming up the walk, so what
does I do but get hold of the churn-
dasher again. Father, he came in.
There, my son!" he says, "I guess
you've been punished enough—you can
go now," and then he took the churn-
dasher right out of my hand. If moth-
er hasn't got back, or if Nell don't
come upstairs," added Joe, with an
irrepressible smiler, "I expect likely
he's churning butter-milk now."

As Tad knew rather less than a Hot-
tentot regarding the mysteries of chur-
ning, the point of Joe's little joke was
not perfectly clear to his own mind.
And perhaps, on second thought, Joe
might have remembered that the tacit
deception practiced toward his father
wasn't exactly in keeping with his pro-
fessed penitence of a moment or two
previous, for he made no attempt to
enlighten his companion, but, taking
up his pole, said, rather hastily, that
he guessed they'd better be getting to-
ward home, as it was considerably
past dinner-time.

Also half-way down Tad brook
were the ruins of an old saw-mill.
Here, among the great, timbers below
the dam, the water made deep eddies
and shady nooks, where trout love to
lie in the heat of the day.

"Throw in there, Tad," said Joe,
pointing to a spot where the dark water
rushed around the end of the broken
dam like a mill-race.

Tad secret-ly thought that any trout
venturesome enough to trust himself in
such a swift current would be swept
down stream in a twinkling. But he
obeyed, and—

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